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Women's Emancipation Union

The Women's Emancipation Union...

Manchester

1892

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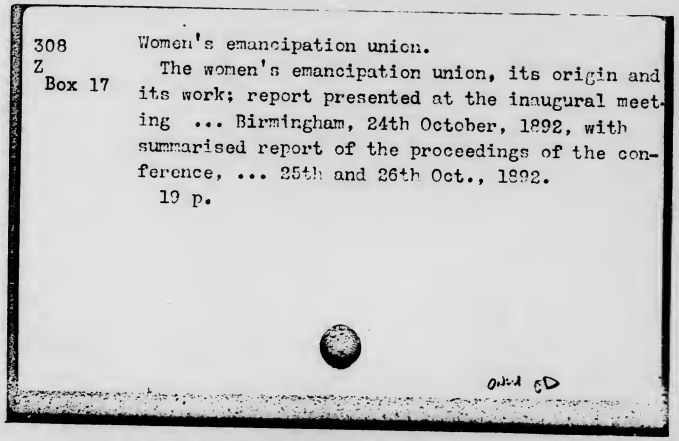

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THE

WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION UNION.

ITS ORIGIN AND ITS WORK.

REPORT PRESENTED AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING,

Held at the Midland Institute, Birmingham, 24th October, 1892;

WITH SUMMARISED

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE,

Held at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, 25th and 26th Oct., 1892.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

MANCHESTER:
"GUARDIAN" PRINTING WORKS, BLACKFRIARS STREET.

1892.

Women's Emancipation Union.

An Association of Workers to Secure the Political, Social, and Economic Independence of Women.

COUNCIL:

Mrs. Ashton Saunderson	Mrs. McKinnel
Mr. John Bayly	Mrs. McIlquham
Mr. Charles M. Beaumont	Dr. Kate Mitchell
Mr. John Boyd Kinnear	Mrs. Pochin
Mrs. Mona Caird.	A. E. Schaw Protheroe
Miss Colby	Mrs. W. B. Smith
Mrs. Mary Cozens	Mrs. Agnes Sunley
The Lady Florence Dixie	Mrs. Jessy Williams
Mrs. J. G. Grenfell	Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy
Mrs. Langdon Down	Miss Anna M. N. Young

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, Congleton.

Treasurer: Mr. W. B. Smith, 19, Carpenter Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Terms of Membership: Approval of the Objects of the Union, and Personal Effort in their behalf.

This Union Claims for Women—

1. Equality of right and duty with men in all matters affecting the service of the community and of the State.
2. Equality of opportunity for self-development by the education of the schools and of life.
3. Equality in industry by equal freedom of choice of career.
4. Equality in marriage and equality of parental rights.

L.L. Nov 1913 M5

WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION UNION.

ITS ORIGIN AND ITS WORK.

Paper Read at the Inaugural Meeting, Midland Institute, Birmingham, Oct. 24, 1892.

In April, 1891, Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy addressed a series of letters to the Manchester papers explanatory of the full legal effect of the decision in the then recent Clitheroe case, and of the consequences flowing therefrom. These letters recited the various stages of progress already achieved towards the emancipation of the wife from her legal position of thrall or chattel, and indicated further reforms still necessary to make marriage legally what a true marriage always is morally—the free, loving, companionship of equal souls, recognising no lordship or mastery on either side.

The letters were republished in pamphlet form, and widely circulated, with an appeal for the active co-operation of persons desirous of bringing about these and kindred legal and social reforms. As a consequence of this appeal, Mrs. Elmy received so many expressions of an urgent desire that some society should be formed for the purpose of bringing about these amendments

of the law and of social usage, that in the autumn of the year she prepared and issued, with the concurrence of a few friends, the following programme of the Women's Emancipation Union :—

An Association of workers to secure the political, social, and economic independence of women.

This Union claims for women :—

1. Equality of right and duty with men in all matters affecting the service of the community and of the State.
2. Equality of opportunity for self-development by the education of the schools and of life.
3. Equality in industry by equal freedom of choice of career.
4. Equality in marriage and equality of parental rights.

This was followed up two months later by suggestions for practical work during the winter, and through the approaching Session. The Union, it will be observed, is not a mere Suffrage Society, its aims reaching further and deeper than the simple acquisition of the Parliamentary franchise, which nevertheless its members regard as at once the security for what measure of justice has already been achieved, the leverage by which further reforms can be most speedily effected, and the efficient mechanism by which that womanly and motherly influence, as necessary in the great household of the nation as in the lesser group of the family, can be brought to bear upon the stirring social and political problems of the time. The conditions of the hour indicated clearly that the claim to the Parliamentary franchise for women, married and unmarried alike, was the reform most likely to be readily won, and most immediately fruitful in great results. The measure supported by the Union was the Bill first introduced by Mr. Haldane in August, 1889, the terms of which were :—

1. In all Acts of Parliament relating to the right to vote at parliamentary, municipal, local, and other elections, words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed to include women.

2. No woman shall be subject to legal incapacity from voting at such elections by reason of coverture.

3. No person shall be disqualified from being elected or appointed to, or from filling or holding, any office or position, merely by reason that such person is a woman, or, being a woman, is under coverture.

4. This Act may be cited as the Women's Disabilities Removal Act.

The first two clauses of this Bill, when carried into law, will not only confer the full right of the Parliamentary vote upon all duly qualified women, whether married, unmarried, or widowed; but will determine in favour of qualified married women the vexed and complicated question of their right to vote in various local elections; their votes in such elections being frequently, (though not uniformly,) and perhaps illegally, rejected on the ground that they are married.

In support of this Bill, Mr. Haldane presented on April 27th last, on behalf of the Union, a petition with 2,156 signatures, including many well known and distinguished names. But when it became manifest that the Bill would not, or could not, be seriously pressed during the Session of 1892 (Mr. Haldane's Bill stood as fourth order for April 27th), the Union gave their hearty and undivided support to the Bill introduced by Sir A. Rollit, which had secured the first place on April 27th, and which did not, as some recent measures had done, insultingly provide for the exclusion of the married woman from the enfranchisement offered to her unmarried and widowed sisters, but would, had it become law, have enfranchised a considerable number of duly qualified married women. The Women's Emancipation Union held that a measure which, though not going so far as their own ultimate aims demand, yet struck so deadly a blow at the two disabilities of sex and coverture, and put no barrier to further progress, deserved the earnest support of every honest suffragist. Nor were they willing to lose the favourable occasion offered by the concurrence of a good place for the Bill, making a debate and division practically certain,—a Leader of the House well known to be a supporter of Women's Suffrage, and a majority of members nominally pledged to the principle. They therefore did everything within the limits of their power by petitioning, writing to members, lectures, and meetings, to secure a favourable division.

Some of the members and friends of the Union spent the afternoon of the 26th April in interviewing members at the House of Commons, and so successful were they that they venture to express their hope that still more substantial and effective work of a similar kind may be undertaken on the eve of the next debate in the House of Commons.

The Parliamentary opponents of the Enfranchisement of Women evidently felt that the occasion was critical, and put forth all their energies to defeat the Bill. An urgent whip against it, signed by leading representatives of each of the existing political parties, was issued. Not only so, but Mr. Gladstone himself personally intervened (for the fourth time) to prevent the recognition of women as capable citizens. Six days before the debate he published a letter, addressed to Mr. Samuel Smith, who had given notice that he would move the rejection of the Bill, denouncing the measure, and urgently appealing to the House of Commons to refuse it a second reading. With the feeble and frivolous arguments of this letter this is not the place to deal. They were one and all vitiated by the arrogant assumption, to which it is the province of the Women's Emancipation Union to give the most emphatic denial, that the male half of humanity has the right to dictate to the other half the limits of their "sphere," capacities, and duties; that women are, in effect, imperfect human beings, needing the continual guidance and control of the sex which has usurped authority. More to the point is the effect on the division.

The examination of the division list and list of pairs shows that of the last Gladstonian Ministry, five ex-Cabinet Ministers, Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Mr. Mundella, and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, voted against the enfranchisement of women; whilst three, Mr. Childers, Mr. John Morley, and Sir George Trevelyan, did not vote; and one, Mr. Stansfeld, paired for the second reading of the Bill.

Of other Gladstonian ex-officials, Mr. Woodall was the only one who recorded his vote in favour of women's suffrage. Five others, Mr. J. B. Balfour, Mr. R. W. Duff, Sir Lyon Playfair, Sir Charles Russell, and Mr. C. R. Spencer, took no part on either

side; whilst fourteen ex-officials, Mr. Asher, Mr. C. D. T. Acland, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Bryce, Sir Horace Davey, Mr. Cyril Flower, Mr. H. H. Fowler, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Leveson Gower, Mr. Marjoribanks, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Sir E. J. Reed, and Sir U. K. Shuttleworth, either voted or paired for continuing the political outlawry of every woman in the land.

Had the five ex-Cabinet Ministers and the fourteen ex-officials who voted against the Bill voted for the enfranchisement of women, the second reading of Sir A. Rollit's Bill would have been carried by a majority of fifteen; so that it is not too much to say that on this fourth occasion, as on the three previous ones, the frustration of the hopes of women was directly due to Mr. Gladstone and to the inconsistency and want of fidelity to their professed principles of justice, as against mere prerogative, of the nominal leaders of the Liberal party.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these efforts, and in spite also of gross misrepresentations of the character and scope of the Bill, the majority against the measure numbered only 23—a sufficient mark, this, of the progress the question has of recent years made in public opinion.

The analysis of the division, including pairs and tellers, gives the following interesting results:—

FOR THE BILL.

Conservatives	92;	of these, known friends....	73
Gladstonians	57;	„	43
Home Rulers	12;	„	7
Liberal Unionists	18;	....	13
Totals.....	179		136

AGAINST THE BILL.

Conservatives	84;	of these, known foes	40
Gladstonians	84;	„	31
Home Rulers	7;	„	0
Liberal Unionists	27;	„	16
Totals.....	202		87

It should be further noted that, of the 202 opponents of the Bill, thirty-three had, in earlier years, supported Women's Suffrage; of these, twenty-two were Gladstonian Liberals.

The Women's Emancipation Union desire here to record the expression of their earnest thanks to the 179 friends of justice to women who on this occasion supported their claim to the rights of free citizens. More especially do they record their gratitude to the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, the then leader of the House of Commons, who not only voted for the Bill, but in an able and interesting speech defended the claim of women to the Parliamentary franchise. They venture to assure the partizans of mere male prerogative, in the words of Mr. Balfour himself, that "this question will again arise, menacing and ripe for solution;" and they accept it as their proud privilege to assist in speeding the utter rout of narrow selfishness and blind injustice.

As soon as it became apparent that the General Election would take place in the early summer, the Women's Emancipation Union took active steps, not only through their own members, but also through friends and correspondents all over the country, to enlighten local public opinion with regard to Women's Suffrage, and to ascertain the views of candidates. They did not relax their efforts throughout and beyond the period of the Election. The results up to this date show that in the new House of Commons there are 270 avowed friends of Women's Suffrage, as against 129 known opponents.

The Union ask their friends to continue this active educational work, and to spare no pains in the months yet before them, so that when the question is brought before Parliament next Session, a clear majority of the House may be ranged on the side of that larger human justice which recognises and includes women. They further urge their friends to hold themselves prepared for immediate action should the question be raised in an unexpected form.

They take this opportunity of thanking those friends who gave them vigorous help throughout the electoral campaign, and the many others who have assisted throughout the year by contributing

letters, paragraphs, and notes to local newspapers. They ask the continuance and extension of this effective mode of operation.

In November last, Mrs. McIlquham, on behalf of the Union, raised a discussion at Cheltenham, and carried a resolution affirming that the Enfranchisement of Women was the most urgently needed of all Parliamentary reforms; and in December she read before the Bedminster Habitation of the Primrose League her valuable paper, entitled, "The Enfranchisement of Women: an Ancient Right, a Modern Need." Mrs. Ashton Saunderson, of Hull, has aided the great work of the Union, not only by her action on the Hull School Board, but by her many addresses and speeches in support of equal justice to women. In March, Mrs. Elmy addressed meetings at Hull (three) and Leeds; and in April she spoke at Harrogate, Sunderland, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Islington, Leicester, and Bedford. At most of these meetings, petitions to Parliament in favour of Women's Suffrage and memorials to political leaders and local members were unanimously adopted.

The literature of the Union (see Appendix A) has been extensively circulated. Of Mrs. McIlquham's valuable pamphlet on the Enfranchisement of Women, 8,000 copies have been already issued, whilst more than 15,000 copies of that part of it relating to the local franchises enjoyed by women have been distributed as a leaflet, with good effect in inducing women to make wise use of their local elections.

The thanks of the Union are especially due to Mr. C. M. Beaumont, Mrs. Mona Caird, Mr. John Boyd Kinnear, Mrs. McIlquham, and the writer of the "Dialogue," for valuable contributions to their literature; and also to Lord Shand, for kindly permitting the reproduction and circulation of his letter to the *Times* on the "Law of Husband and Wife."

The Divorce Bill, first introduced in 1889 by Dr. Hunter, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Fenwick, and Mr. Herbert Gardner, and reintroduced each subsequent Session without being considered by the House, came on for discussion somewhat unexpectedly on the 26th April last, when the second reading was defeated in a

small House. In the course of the debate exception was taken to the fact that a measure gravely altering the law of England should be introduced by a Scottish member; Dr. Hunter therefore suggested that an English member should be found to introduce the Bill next Session. The Women's Emancipation Union have now pleasure in announcing that Mr. Frank Lockwood, Q.C., has promised to take charge of the Bill. They take this opportunity of tendering their hearty thanks to Mr. Lockwood, as well as to the five gentlemen who have hitherto been the sponsors of the Bill; and of expressing their hope that Mr. Asquith in particular, now that he is in a position to do so, will give such effective support to the measure as shall secure the removal during the coming Session of the shameful and immoral inequality as between husband and wife of the English law of divorce. Mr. Asquith should feel himself the more bound to do this inasmuch as he not only voted, but spoke (and somewhat bitterly) on the 27th of April last, against permitting to women even an indirect voice in the making of the laws to which they are compelled to submit.

In answer to a letter from the Secretary of the Women's Emancipation Union, urging the re-introduction by Her Majesty's Government of the Devolution of Estates Bill, first introduced in 1884, and again in 1889, by Sir Horace Davey, the Lord Chancellor stated that although he could not at present undertake that the Government would deal with the question in the coming Session, he was yet entirely in favour of the amendments of the law proposed by the Bill, and would be glad to see such a measure become law. As this Bill would remove all the injustices from which women at present suffer under the law of intestacy, and would place male and female heirs on a footing of perfect equality, the Women's Emancipation Union intend to persevere in their efforts to secure the re-introduction of the Bill, if possible, as a Government measure, and to insure its early passing into law.

The Liberal party being deeply pledged to deal during the coming Session with measures creating Parish and District Councils, the Women's Emancipation Union strenuously urge the

necessity of the full and frank recognition of the ancient rights of women in parochial government, and demand that in any proposed legislation those rights be affirmed and extended.

They seek, further, the removal of each and all of the present anomalies of local government in regard to the rights of women to vote and be voted for, married and unmarried alike. They claim nothing less for women than perfect equality of right with men as regards social and political function and duty—that sex shall be no longer a barrier to the exercise of individual capacity, that the community shall no longer be defrauded of the services of one half of its capable members.

They affirm, in short, that women, equally with men, are human beings, and as such are entitled and resolved to take their part in public duty, and to have an effective voice in determining the conditions under which they live. This is their abiding principle. Their policy as a Union is to stand aloof from party trammels, believing as they do that justice to half the human race involves considerations larger and deeper than any of the questions which divide contending political partisans; to turn party exigencies to the service of justice; and to move steadily along the line of least resistance to the destined goal. When the slavery of sex shall have been abolished, and the reign of justice and freedom shall have been inaugurated, then, and not till then, will their work be accomplished.

They now appeal, in view of what they have already accomplished, and of the task still before them, for the help of all lovers of justice. They ask the rich to give largely and freely of their wealth, that so the financial burden may not press too heavily on those who are not endowed with this world's goods, but who are contributing lavishly of their faculty, their time, their labour, their very lives. They ask those who have worked strenuously not to "weary in well-doing," the laggards they entreat to quicken their pace and join the ranks—from each and all they ask active sympathy and practical support.

INAUGURAL MEETING.

AT the inaugural meeting of the Women's Emancipation Union held at the Midland Institute, Birmingham, 24th October, 1892, Mrs. McIlquham, P.L.G., in the chair, it was moved by Mrs. Ashton Saunderson, seconded by Mrs. McKinnel, supported by Mrs. Ransom, Mrs. Mary Cozens, and Mrs. Rollason, and unanimously resolved:

"That this Union, believing that the recognition and establishment of the equal political, social, and human rights of women with men is the most important and urgently pressing of all reforms, pledge themselves to use every legitimate means to secure this recognition and establishment."

It was further moved by Mrs. Rollason, seconded by Miss Smith, supported by Mrs. Partridge, and unanimously resolved:

"That the practical management of the Women's Emancipation Union vest for the present in a council consisting of the following persons:

Mrs. Ashton Saunderson	Mrs. McKinnel
Mr. John Bayly	Mrs. McIlquham
Mr. C. M. Beaumont	Dr. Kate Mitchell
Mr. John Boyd Kinnear	Mrs. Pochin
Mrs. Mona Caird	A. E. Schaw Protheroe
Miss Colby	Mrs. W. B. Smith
Mrs. Mary Cozens	Mrs. Agnes Sunley
The Lady Florence Dixie	Mrs. Jessy Williams
Mrs. J. G. Grenfell	Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy
Mrs. Langdon Down	Miss Anna M. N. Young

That Mrs. Elmy be the Secretary of the Union, and that all other Executive Officers be appointed by the Council.

"That it be an instruction to the Council to consider and report at the next general meeting of members upon a practical workable scheme for a truly national organisation."

It was moved by Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, seconded by Mrs. Agnes Sunley, supported by Mrs. Rollason, and carried with acclamation:

"That the hearty thanks of this meeting be presented to Mrs. McIlquham, P.L.G., not only for her able conduct in the chair on this occasion, but also for her constant and unwearying service to the cause of womanhood."

CONFERENCE.

AT the Conference held under the auspices of the Women's Emancipation Union, at the Grand Hotel, Colmore Row, Birmingham, on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 25th and 26th, 1892, the following papers were read, and the following resolutions and memorials adopted:—

On Tuesday, 25th October, at 11 a.m. Mr. Councillor R. F. Martineau in the chair. After the Chairman's opening speech, a paper was read by Mrs. McIlquham, P.L.G., on "The Rights and Duties of Women in Local Government;" and one on "The Need of Women as Poor-Law Guardians," by Mrs. Agnes Sunley.

It was moved by Mrs. A. C. Osler:

"That, in the opinion of this Conference, no scheme for the formation of district or parish councils will be satisfactory that does not secure to women the same right to elect and to be elected which they now possess in parochial government."

The resolution was seconded by Mrs. Ashton Saunderson (Hull), and after being spoken to by Mrs. Ashford, Mrs. C. E. Matthews, Mrs. Rollason, and Mr. W. B. Smith, was unanimously adopted; as was also the following memorial, moved by Mrs. Ashford, seconded by Mrs. Rollason, and ordered to be signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Conference, and duly forwarded:

"To the Right Honourable Henry H. Fowler, M.P., President of the Local Government Board. This memorial of a Conference held at the Grand Hotel, Colmore Row, Birmingham, on Tuesday, 25th October, 1892, respectfully showeth that no scheme for the formation of district or parish councils will be satisfactory which does not secure to women the same right to elect, and to be elected, which they now possess in

parochial government. That your memorialists desire further to point out that under the present confused and anomalous conditions of our varying forms of local government women may elect to municipal and county councils, but may not themselves be elected, whilst to boards of guardians, rural sanitary authorities, and school boards, married women may be elected, but may not themselves elect; that the necessities of our modern life urgently demand the active co-operation of women in every department of local administration; that your memorialists therefore pray that you will, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, introduce and support such legislation only with regard to local government, as shall recognise and establish the equal rights of women, married and unmarried alike, with men—to elect and to be elected—shall sweep away the existing anomalies and contradictions, and shall secure to the community the advantage of the efficient services of the womanly feeling, experience, and intellect of the nation. And your memorialists will ever pray."

At 3-30 p.m. Mrs. Rollason took the chair, and after her opening speech Mrs. Morgan-Browne, in the unavoidable absence through illness of Mr. J. Boyd Kinnear, read his paper on "The Education of Women."

The following resolution was moved by Principal Heath, Mason College, Birmingham, seconded by Mrs. Morgan-Browne, and after being spoken to by Mrs. Ashford, Mrs. Saunderson, and several other ladies, was unanimously adopted:

"That the time has now come when, not only for the benefit of women themselves, but also for the use and service of the whole community, every educational advantage and opportunity should be open to women equally with men, and every restriction placed upon intellect and capacity on the ground of sex should be abolished."

The subjoined memorial, moved by Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, and seconded by Miss Southall, was also unanimously agreed to:

"To the Right Honourable Arthur H. Dyke-Acland, M.P., Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education.

"This Memorial of a Conference, held at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, on Tuesday, 25th October, 1892;

"Respectfully showeth:

"That, while the inspectors of public elementary schools are sent to boys' and girls' schools alike, the office of inspector (with the exceptions

of directress of needlework, and inspectress of cookery and laundry work) has been hitherto conferred on men only; that experience has abundantly shown that women make as good instructors of young persons as men do, and has proved them to be in many respects more efficient teachers than men. That your memorialists are of opinion that if a fair opportunity were granted to women it would be found that their special capabilities would make them equally effective in some, and superior in other respects, for the general work of inspection; that it is altogether impossible that men, however thoroughly trained, and however much they have learned by practical experience, can be as suitable for the inspection of girls' schools, or of some departments of mixed schools, as women would naturally be, while in the schools some things for which their education and sympathies especially fit them would be more readily perceived by women than by men. We therefore respectfully request that you will take into consideration the claims and the qualifications of women for the office of inspector of schools, and that in making the next addition to the staff you will be pleased to appoint one or more of such ladies as shall appear to be in other respects duly qualified for this responsible office."

Mrs. Ashton Saunderson then read Mr. C. M. Beaumont's paper on "Women and the Law Courts," and the following resolution, moved by Mrs. Agnes Sunley, seconded by Mrs. McIlquham, and supported by Mrs. Elmy, was unanimously adopted :—

"That this Conference urges upon women of mature years and established position the duty of exercising, for the protection of their sister women and in the interests of public morality and justice, their right, as a part of the public, to attend our courts of justice to witness legal proceedings."

On Wednesday, 26th October, the Conference re-assembled at 11 a.m., Mr. W. B. Smith presiding. The Chairman read the following resolution, which had been forwarded from a Conference of the Women's Liberal Association at Bristol :

"That this Committee desires to express its earnest sympathy with the aim of the Birmingham Conference to amend the legal position of women, being well aware that no nation can prosper as it ought while one half of the people are unenfranchised, and placed under the absolute rule of the other half."

After the Chairman's opening speech, Mrs. Rollason, on behalf of the Lady Florence Dixie, read the paper entitled "Woman's Position: Social, Physical, and Political," and Mrs. Cozens followed with the paper "Why do Women Want the Franchise?" written for the Conference by Mrs. Mona Caird.

Mrs. McIlquham moved :

"That this Conference, believing that the recognition and establishment of the equal political, social, and human rights of women with men is the most important and urgently pressing of all reforms, pledges itself to use every legitimate means to secure this recognition and establishment."

The resolution was seconded by Mrs. Morgan-Browne, and having been spoken to by Mrs. Saunderson, Mrs. Rollason, Mrs. Ashford, Mrs. Cozens, Miss Southall, Mrs. Lawrenson, Mrs. Elmy, and others, was unanimously adopted, and copies were ordered to be forwarded to the leaders of each of the political parties, and to the members for Birmingham.

At 3·30 p.m. Mrs. A. C. Osler took the chair, and after her opening address, Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy spoke on "The Work of the Coming Session;" after which the Rev. J. C. Street moved, Mrs. McKinnel seconded, and Mrs. Saunderson, Mrs. Ashford, Mrs. Rollason, and other ladies supported the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :

"That this Conference recognises the importance of the practical programme placed before it, and pledges itself to vigorous effort in order to secure the passing into law of the Devolution of Estates Bill and the Divorce Bill, and of measures securing to women equal rights with men in matters of local administration, and the power and protection of the Parliamentary franchise."

Hearty votes of thanks to Miss C. J. Smith for the great labour she had given, and the tact and skill she had shown in the arrangements for the Conference, and to the Birmingham friends for their generous hospitality to their visitors, closed the proceedings of the Conference, which had been throughout interesting, animated, and frequently enthusiastic.

PUBLIC MEETING.

A PUBLIC meeting in support of the claim of women to the Parliamentary Franchise was also held on Wednesday, 26th October, in the Masonic Hall, Birmingham, in connection with the Conference; Mr. Councillor Lancaster presiding. Amongst those present were Mrs. Morgan-Browne, Mrs. W. Elmy (Congleton), Mrs. McIlquham, Mrs. Rollason, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Osler, the Rev. J. C. Street and Mrs. Street, Mr. W. B. Smith, Mr. Frank Wright, Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Smith, Mrs. Saunderson, Miss W. H. Ryland, Mrs. J. K. Reid, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Partridge, Mrs. Ashford, Mrs. Ransom, Mrs. Fellowes, Mrs. Farrow, Mrs. Heap, &c. Letters of apology were read from Mr. W. S. B. McLaren, M.P., Mr. Haldane, Q.C., M.P., Councillor Martineau, and others. Mr. McLaren wrote expressing his sympathy with the movement for the "emancipation or the enfranchisement of women." "The great majority of public men," the writer added, "shrank from all discussion of the subject, and instead of meeting the supporters of the movement in open debate, they tried by underhand means to prevent any debate at all. From the Cabinet might be expected resolute hostility, though they would no doubt leave the question nominally open. The friends of the movement would also have to meet the intrigues of Mr. Labouchere and some others who had been only too successful in the past. Nevertheless, if a good day was secured for the debate in next Session, he believed the second reading of the Bill would be carried. It depended upon women in the meantime to impress upon members of Parliament that they were really in earnest."

Mr. A. C. Osler moved, Mrs. Rollason seconded, and the Rev. J. C. Street, Mr. Frank Wright, and Mrs. Morgan-Browne supported the following resolution, which was carried with three dissentients:

"That this meeting claims for women on equal terms with men the protection and power of the Parliamentary vote, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to each of the members for Birmingham."

Letters of sympathy with the objects of the Conference, and of regret at unavoidable absence, were received from the following amongst many others, but owing to their great number they could not be read: Mrs. Beard, Gloucester; Mr. J. W. Barrs, Leicester; Miss Bremner, London; Mrs. Carter, Bedford; Mrs. Evans, Oxford; Miss Gay, Penzance; Mrs. Cunninghame Graham, Gartmore; Mrs. Gilchrist, Sheffield; Miss Edith Gittins, Leicester; the Rev. Alan Greenwell, Leamington; Mrs. J. G. Grenfell, London; Mrs. Stephenson Hunter, Oxford; Mrs. Haycraft, Brighton; Mr. Walter Lewin, Bebington; Mr. Joseph Malins, Birmingham; Dr. Kate Mitchell, London; Mrs. Mitchell, Caerleon; Miss O'Dowde, St. Leonards; Mrs. Pochin, Bodnant; A. E. Schaw-Protheroe, Whitlands; Mr. C. Reynolds, North Shields; Miss Robson, South Shields; Mrs. Sibthorp, London; Mr. James Stuart, Edinburgh; Mrs. Tebb, Burstow; Miss Anna Young, Glasgow.

APPENDIX A.

LITERATURE CIRCULATED.

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(*Or* To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal)
in Parliament assembled.
The humble Petition of the Undersigned sheweth:

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That your Petitioners claim for women, on equal terms with men, the protection and power of the Parliamentary vote.

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That the existing law of divorce, by reason of its inequality and injustice, is demoralising to the husband, oppressive and degrading to the wife, hurtful to domestic and social morality, and urgently needs amendment.

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